receive a Gold Seal even though the malformation may be characteristic of this particular specimen."

The first approach to judging a seedling should be "Is it an outstanding improvement over an existing variety, or is it outstanding because of its size, form or color which makes it distinctly different from what we already have." This approach is entirely different from that in judging established varieties where we are looking for perfection, measured by set standards, plus perfect condition. There are no standards for seedlings, the only criteria we have are those of improvement or novelty. Only those blooms which meet either of these two tests should be considered for Gold Seals.

Once a seedling has passed the improvement or novelty test, condition is not quite as important in determining Gold Seal value as it is in the established bloom category. However, in order to protect the quality of Gold Seal blooms and conform to the high standards set by the rules, we cannot be too lenient and award Gold Seals to bloom in poor condition. Referring to the scale of points it seems in order, that a seedling bloom which would be rated as much as five points off because of condition should not be awarded a Gold Seal.

Giving or withholding the Award of Merit requires just as much thought and judgement as does a Gold Seal, possibly more so. This award should be given a seedling which is not of Gold Seal quality in its present state, but which appears to be worthy of further consideration or cultivation in order for it to attain such quality. As for condition the same rule as in the case of Gold Seals should apply.

Rule 9 states that any malformed hibiscus bloom should not receive a Gold Seal even though the malformation may be characteristic of that particular specimen. We have no standards for comparison, in the case of seedlings, but any malformed seedling should be viewed with a lot of suspicion as to its possibility of improvement.

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